

## Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KINSHASA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9832

INFO AMCONSUL LUBUMBASHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 8181

STADIS//////////

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (E.O. TAGS & SUBJ OMITTED)

FOR UNDERSECRETARY ROGERS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: ECON, ELTN, CG, RH, AO

SUBJECT: ZAIRE AND ZIMBABWE: LOOKING AHEAD

1. PER CONVERSATION DURING THE SECRETARY'S VISIT TO KINSHASA, THE FOLLOWING PROVIDES OUR INITIAL THOUGHTS ON HOW A FAVORABLE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC EVOLUTION IN RHODESIA MIGHT AFFECT ZAIRE. OTHERS WILL BE BETTER PLACED THAN WE TO ANALYZE THE INTERWOVEN ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CONSEQUENCES OF DEVELOPMENTS IN RHODESIA BUT WE CAN HIGHLIGHT A FEW CRUCIAL ISSUES AFFECTING ZAIRE.

2. CURRENT DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES EMPHASIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING RHODESIA'S ECONOMY AND TRANSPORT SYSTEM. BECAUSE OF ALREADY EXISTING TIES BETWEEN SOUTHERN AFRICAN ECONOMIES, FAR MORE THAN PURELY RHODESIAN INTERESTS ARE INVOLVED, HOWEVER, AND ZAIRE HAS A STRONG INTEREST IN THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME IN RHODESIA. KINSHASA AND LUBUMBASHI REPORTING HAS UNDERLINED THE DANGERS FOR ZAIRE OF DISINTEGRATION IN RHODESIA. THIS MESSAGE LOOKS AT POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE LIGHT OF A POSITIVE POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC OUTCOME IN THAT AREA.

3. SHORT TERM: PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE WILL HAVE FEW SHORT-TERM DIRECT EFFECTS ON ZAIRE. NOTWITHSTANDING SANCTIONS AND

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RECENT UNREST, ZAIRE HAS CONTINUED ITS LONG-STANDING COMMERCIAL

RELATIONS WITH SOUTHERN RHODESIA. RHODESIA IS ALREADY A MAJOR SUPPLIER OF FOOD, GRAINS, AND METALLURGICAL COAL FOR ZAIRE'S COPPER-PRODUCING SHABA REGION. ADDITIONAL IMPORTS OF RHODESIAN PRODUCTS HAVE BEEN FORESTALLED BY ZAIRE'S LACK OF FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATHER THAN ZAIRE'S ADHERENCE TO THE ECONOMIC SANCTIONS AGAINST RHODESIA.

4. COPPER: IN RECENT MONTHS THE SOUTHERN ROUTE THROUGH RHODESIA HAS BECOME THE MOST IMPORTANT LINK FOR THE EXPORT OF ZAIRE'S COPPER. WHILE WE DOUBT THAT ZAIRE WILL SHIFT MUCH MORE OF ITS EXPORTS TO THIS ROUTE, RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN RHODESIA REINFORCE CONFIDENCE IN THE LONG-TERM VIABILITY OF THIS ROUTE AND CONCOMITANTLY DECREASE PREOCCUPATION WITH THE BENGUELA ROUTE. OVER THE LAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS LONDON METAL EXCHANGE PRICES HAVE NOT PROVEN ESPECIALLY RESPONSIVE TO ZAIRE'S AND ZAMBIA'S TRANSPORT PROBLEMS. WE WOULD NOT EXPECT MUCH REACTION TO NEWS OF A PEACEFUL TRANSITION TO MAJORITY RULE, ALTHOUGH THERE COULD BE SLIGHT DOWNWARD PRESSURE.

5. THERE ARE TWO QUESTIONS ABOUT TRANSPORT DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA WHICH WILL IMPINGE UPON ZAIRE'S RELATIONS WITH ZIMBABWE:

- A. WILL THE LIFTING OF SANCTIONS, AND A PRESUMED INCREASE IN FOREIGN TRADE, CAUSE A GLUT ON RHODESIA'S RAILROAD NETWORK?
- B. WILL MOZAMBIKAN PORTS AND RAILROADS BE RESTORED TO THEIR CUSTOMARY OPERATING EFFICIENCY?

6. LONG TERM: PEACEFUL CONVERSION TO MAJORITY RULE IN ZIMBABWE COULD REINFORCE THE ALREADY STRONG ECONOMIC TIES IN SOUTHERN AFRICA. LUBUMBASHI, THE CAPITAL OF THE SHABA REGION, WAS ORIGINALLY SETTLED BY THE BRITISH AS THE NORTHERN LIMIT OF THE RHODESIAN VENTURES. GEOGRAPHICALLY, IT IS WELL-PLACED TO BE INTEGRATED INTO THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN ECONOMIC SYSTEM. INDEED, ITS ROAD, RAIL AND ENERGY LINKS NOW TIE IT MORE TO THE INDUSTRIAL CENTERS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA THAN TO KINSHASA, THE CAPITAL OF ZAIRE. THE EMERGENCE OF AN INDEPENDENT ZIMBABWE WOULD PROBABLY INTEGRATE SHABA (AND PERHAPS THE KASAI) MORE CLOSELY INTO THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN REGION. THE CENTRAL GOVT IS PRESENTLY TRYING TO TIGHTEN ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN KINSHASA AND SHABA THROUGH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE INGA-SHABA TRANSMISSION LINE. UNLESS THE GOZ TAKES FURTHER STEPS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATIONS AND TRANSPORT BETWEEN THE WESTERN (KINSHASA) AND SOUTHEASTERN (SHABA) PARTS OF THE COUNTRY, ITS  
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EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH THE DANGERS OF ECONOMIC (AND POSSIBLY POLITICAL) FRAGMENTATION COULD BE IMPEDED.

7. RELATIONS WITH ANGOLA: WITH AN ASSURED SOUTHERN ROUTE TO THE SEA, ZAIRE WILL FEEL LESS PRESSURE TO MAKE CONCESSIONS TO SECURE THE REOPENING OF THE BENGUELA RAILROAD. MOBUTU MIGHT ALSO FEEL LESS CAUTIOUS AND RESTRAINED IN HIS DEALINGS WITH ANGOLA.

8. ALL OF THE ABOVE ASSUMES THE EVOLUTION IN RHODESIA OF A MODERATE AND COMPETENT GOVERNMENT THAT WOULD NOT BLOCK ZAIRE TRANSIT TRAFFIC WITH SOUTH AFRICA. SHOULD THE RHODESIAN POLITICAL PROCESS LEAD TO THE RISE OF A MORE RADICAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTED TO PUTTING ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL PRESSURE ON SOUTH AFRICA, ZAIRE MIGHT ONCE AGAIN FACE THE PROBLEM OF INSECURE ACCESS TO THE SEA. AND, IN THIS CONNECTION, WE WOULD REITERATE OUR RECOMMENDATION (KINSHASA 5211) THAT THE DEPT UNDERTAKE CONTINGENCY PLANNING.  
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